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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

348th meeting

Tuesday, 7 April 2015, 3 p.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Election of other officers

The Chair: Before the Commission moves to hear from delegations in the general debate, there is one more pressing issue in terms of the organization of work, namely, the election of the Chairs of the Working Groups. It is my understanding that there is a general agreement on the candidatures of the Chairs of the Working Groups.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, and Mr. Bouchaib El Oumni, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Permanent Mission of Morocco, as the Chairs of Working Group I and Working Group II, respectively.

It was so decided.

General debate

The Chair: In commencing the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission, we will start with the list of speakers inscribed for the general debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible. As we have only a day and a half for general debate and to maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations already inscribed on the list to keep in mind that the rolling list implies that they should be prepared to speak at any time, possibly sooner than they had originally planned.

I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in their national capacity.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this year's substantive session. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups, namely, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov of Kazakhstan and Minister Plenipotentiary Bouchaib El Oumni of Morocco, on their elections, and would like to assure the Commission of the Movement's full cooperation.

NAM stresses the need for concrete results in the 2015-2017 cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and urges all member States to show the required political will and flexibility to that end. While highlighting the importance of the discussions held in the last cycle, the Movement stands ready to cooperate actively and constructively with all parties in order to agree on concrete recommendations on the issues on the Commission's agenda.

NAM underscores its long-standing position regarding the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism

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as the core principle of negotiation in these areas. In this regard, the Movement reaffirms the Disarmament Commission's relevance and centrality — with its universal membership, and as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations — for considering specific disarmament issues and submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Commission has contributed to the field of disarmament and arms control in the past, including by reaching a consensus on guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional arms control. NAM regrets that the Commission has been unable to achieve success during previous cycles, due to a lack of political will and to the inflexible positions taken by certain nuclear-weapon States.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States, and NAM strongly calls upon them to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, weapons and delivery systems in accordance with their relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the unequivocal undertaking that they made in 2000 and further reiterated in 2010 in the final documents of those years' Review Conferences.

NAM stresses that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential in strengthening international peace and security. In this context, the Movement stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on confidence-building measures or any non-proliferation efforts.

The Movement underlines that General Assembly resolution 69/58, entitled "Follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament", provides a concrete road map to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. In this context, negotiations must commence as an urgent priority in the Conference on Disarmament for the prompt conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction, which would enable the international community to make tangible progress on nuclear disarmament. At the same time, it is dependent on a strong political will, without which no recommendation can help us overcome the current stalemate.

In the context of that resolution, the Movement invites Member States, the United Nations system, civil society, academia, parliamentarians, the mass media and individuals to commemorate 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons through all means of educational and public awareness-raising activities about the threat posed by nuclear weapons to humanity and the necessity of their total elimination.

The United Nations High-level International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, to be convened no later than 2018, as decided through that same resolution, would indeed provide the international community with an opportunity to review progress made in nuclear disarmament and to make concrete recommendations in order to maintain the momentum created by the High-Level Conference and to intensify international efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

NAM welcomes the continued consideration of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, convened by Austria on 8 and 9 December 2014. NAM emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and, pending that, all non-nuclear-weapon States should be provided, as a matter of high priority, with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding security assurances by all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances.

The Movement underlines that improving existing nuclear weapons or developing new types of nuclear weapons contradicts the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament as a multilateral legal obligation, as well as the commitments undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in this regard. NAM reaffirms the importance of the application by nuclear-weapon States of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all measures related to the fulfilment of their nuclear-disarmament obligations and undertakings.

The Movement underscores the importance of the full realization of the inalienable right of developing countries to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

NAM once again stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States and should not impose restrictions on access to material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes required by developing countries. The Movement stresses that the issues related to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. Measures and initiatives taken in this regard should be within the framework of international law and should contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

NAM States parties to the NPT stress the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Treaty, and of implementing the action plans adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. NAM States parties to the NPT further underline that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, should be implemented without any further delay, and reaffirms that that resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, due to have been held in 2012, was not convened despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This runs contrary to the letter and the spirit of the 1995 resolution violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT stress that the commitments and obligations regarding the zone, as contained in the 1995 resolution and 2010 Action Plan, remain valid and yet unfulfilled. They strongly reject the alleged impediments presented by the conveners for not having convened the conference on schedule.

In this context, NAM States parties to the NPT deplore that Israel is the only party in the Middle East that has rejected participating in the conference as mandated in the 2010 Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT call for the full and immediate implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 Action Plan on the Middle East in order to avoid negative repercussions on the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its 2015 review process, and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole. In this regard, NAM recalls that in the final document of the Tehran Summit of August 2012, the Heads of State or Government, while strongly supporting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, called upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps for the establishment of such a zone.

Pending the establishment of such a zone, they further demand that Israel, the only country of the region to have neither joined the NPT nor declared its intention to do so, renounce possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, promptly place all of its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards, and conduct its nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime. They express great concern about Israel's acquisition of nuclear capability, which poses a serious and ongoing threat to the security of neighbouring States, as well as other States. They condemn Israel for continuing to stockpile nuclear arsenals and call for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment used in the development of materials and facilities, resources or devices, and the extension of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel. NAM underscores the need for strong and genuine political will in support of multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular negotiations during the Conference on Disarmament, which remains the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

In conclusion, the Movement reiterates its full support for the Commission's work and believes that it should be intensified through strengthened political will with a view to achieving meaningful outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

At the outset, CELAC would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2015 substantive session, and to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau as well. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia for his tireless work as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission last year.

CELAC reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. CELAC reiterates its willingness to work constructively to fulfil the tasks entrusted to the Commission.

The Community recalls the historic decision made by the Heads of State and Government of the States members of CELAC gathered in Havana on the occasion of the second summit of the Community on 28 and 29 January 2014 to formally declare Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, and reaffirm CELAC's ongoing commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful means, with the aim of forever eliminating the threat or use of force from our region. That decision was reiterated during the third summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January.

CELAC member States reaffirm the need to advance towards the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. In that context, we express our opposition to the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons, which are inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. We also reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and in security policies.

We express our strong support for the conclusion of universal legally binding instruments leading to effective, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament, in order to achieve the goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons according to a multilaterally agreed timetable. We welcome the proposal of Cuba aimed at achieving the adoption of a legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament, which was presented at the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014. In that regard, we highlight the fact that during the Community's summit held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC endorsed the pledge made in Austria.

CELAC member States call for the negotiation and adoption, as soon as possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. While recalling the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, CELAC member States reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and the Charter of the United Nations. The Community reiterates that the only effective guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and prohibition.

CELAC member States express great concern at the humanitarian impact and global long-term consequences of any accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons. We believe that this issue should be raised whenever nuclear weapons are discussed. We therefore commend the organization of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, held in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna, for their deliberations and contributions to the global discourse on achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

As attested by the testimony of survivors and by scientific data and evidence, nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to security, to the development of peoples, and to civilization in general. Furthermore, it has been ascertained that no State or international organization has the capacity to successfully address and provide humanitarian assistance and protection in case of a nuclear blast. Those conferences also highlighted the ongoing risk of the detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or by design.

At the time of establishing the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, we confirmed the pride of our region in being the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we reiterate that the establishment of internationally recognized

nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens international peace and security as well as the non-proliferation regime, and constitutes an important contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all reservations to the Protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to respect the denuclearized character of Latin America and the Caribbean, thus helping to eliminate the possible use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) have been a political, legal and institutional reference point in the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world. OPANAL's experience is also an important legacy of the international community for inspiring the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

CELAC regrets the failure to implement the agreement to hold an international conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon- and weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East. Besides being an important contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, CELAC strongly believes that the establishment of such a zone would be a significant step in the peace process in the Middle East region. CELAC urges that such a conference be held as soon as possible, as agreed by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

We reaffirm the commitment of our States to the NPT and the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of States to the development, research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy, without discrimination, and in conformity with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. The Community also reaffirms the commitment of all parties to the Treaty to facilitating the participation in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

CELAC emphasizes the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT and therefore urges States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear States. We also call on nuclear-weapon States to comply with their commitments under article VI of the Treaty and to advance towards the complete elimination of those weapons. We urge them to fully and immediately implement the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The Community expresses its willingness to fully engage in the NPT Review Conference to be held in New York from 27 April to 22 May. CELAC urges those States listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, ratification of which is indispensable to its entry into force, to accelerate their process of signing and/or ratifying this instrument as a matter of priority, as a demonstration of their political will and commitment to international peace and security.

As we recall the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September 2013, CELAC highlights its intention to ensure proper follow-up of resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". And we welcome the decision of the General Assembly to hold a high-level conference no later than 2018 to identify measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible term, aiming at adopting a treaty banning the development, production, procurement, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and providing for their destruction within a multilaterally agreed timeframe. The Community also welcomes the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We would like to highlight the events around the world to commemorate the first observation of this day and call on Governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action each year to commemorate that day.

CELAC is convinced that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons play an important role in contributing to the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States, and to the enhancement of stability and security, in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, abiding by the voluntary nature and the specific security concerns and situations of States. In that regard, it is worth recalling the relevant resolutions adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

Our region has taken significant steps towards the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, which contributes to the enhancement of international peace and security. We therefore encourage Member States to strengthen,

improve and extend the measures of confidence-building at all levels as appropriate. In that regard, the Community welcomes all transparency and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms already voluntarily undertaken by concerned States in their respective regions or subregions, as well as the information on such measures provided on a voluntary basis to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and to the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures.

The Community also reaffirms the crucial importance of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, and recognizes its significant contribution to efforts carried out in that area. CELAC also stresses the need for its full and effective implementation. CELAC underscores that the adoption of the outcome document of the Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action in 2012 gave the international community a clear goal and timeline to strengthen its efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons.

CELAC reiterates the importance of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. CELAC emphasizes that work must continue at the multilateral level in the framework of the Programme of Action in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, advancing towards the adoption of legally binding instruments on marking and tracing and illicit brokering, in order to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons towards the illicit market.

We take note of the outcome document of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June 2014, and we look forward to participating actively in the review cycle of the Programme of Action for 2014-2018, including the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts in June.

The Community, in reaffirming the importance of regional and international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and their ammunition, agreed to establish a working group to study the crime of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. That working group has the mandate to study this issue comprehensively in order to generate proposals for mechanisms and procedures that will allow us to better and more effectively coordinate our efforts, on the basis of full respect for international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to strengthen, prevent and combat the illicit trade in that category of weapons for the benefit of citizen security.

CELAC expects that the Arms Trade Treaty, the first legally binding instrument on arms trade, can contribute to providing an effective response to the serious consequences that the illicit and non-regulated trade in arms represent for many people and States, in particular through the diversion of arms to non-State actors or unauthorized users, often linked to transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. We further hope that this Treaty can contribute to the prevention of armed conflict, armed violence and violations of human rights, including international instruments for the protection of human rights and humanitarian law.

At the same time, in the light of the entry into force of the Treaty in December 2014, we call for the Treaty to be implemented in a balanced, transparent and objective manner, respecting the sovereign right of all States to ensure their self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We recognize the wish of Mexico to host in 2015 the first conference of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty and underscore its leadership during the preparatory process for that meeting, as well as the aspiration of Trinidad and Tobago to host the secretariat of the Treaty.

The issue of anti-personnel mines continues to demand the attention of the international community. CELAC welcomes the declaration of Central America as a mine-free zone. CELAC recognizes the value of the assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service. Our group stresses the importance of cooperation for demining and assistance to victims, and hopes that the successes achieved in recent years will continue. We also take note of the Maputo+15 Declaration adopted at the third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in June 2014.

CELAC supports international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions and by their use against civilian populations, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. It also recognizes and values the wish of any State to take multilaterally agreed

immediate steps regarding the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions. Similarly, we recognize the recent accession of Belize to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the establishment of Central America as a cluster-ammunition-free zone during the fifth Meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions held in San José, Costa Rica in September 2014.

In closing, CELAC reaffirms the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the only specialized negotiating body within the multilateral disarmament mechanism. The Community once again deeply regrets that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to agree on and implement its programme of work. CELAC urges all members of the Conference to show the political will necessary to ensure the commencement without delay of its substantive work through the adoption and implementation of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that advances the agenda of nuclear disarmament, including through negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention; on a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances; on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and on a non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices that serve both non-proliferation and disarmament purposes.

Furthermore, the Community would like to point out the important work undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the assistance it provides to the countries of the region for the implementation of disarmament measures in various areas.

The Community regrets that the Disarmament Commission has been unable to make recommendations in previous cycles. It is fundamental that the Commission fulfil its mandate as expressed by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We call upon the States Members of the United Nations to show the necessary flexibility and political will to make progress on these recommendations.

CELAC reaffirms its readiness to cooperate with the members of the Commission to achieve concrete results during this session. The Community calls on all delegations to show the political will necessary to enable the United Nations deliberative body to fulfil its mandate and formulate substantive recommendations to the General Assembly.

Mr. Varma (India): The Indian delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as the Chair of the 2015 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and assures you of its full cooperation. We would also like to thank you, Sir, for the consultations that you have held, including taking forward the work of the Commission towards the adoption earlier today of the agenda for the next triennial cycle. We would like to also convey our congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, and Minister El Oumni of Morocco for taking on the responsibilities for the two Working Groups, and we pledge to them our full support.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by Ambassador Percaya of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The UNDC meets this year against the backdrop of considerable disappointment that it was not able to adopt recommendations in 2014, but also of the strong support of the General Assembly, expressed in resolution 69/77, which called for the UNDC's revitalization in this new triennial cycle. India continues to value the role of the Commission — the only body with universal membership and the specialized deliberative leg of the triad of the disarmament machinery put in place by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

While recalling its past successes in adopting guidelines and recommendations on issues of continuing value to the international community, it is important to stress that the current difficulties of the UNDC relate less to any inherent deficiencies in the machinery and more to the lack of political will of member States to invest in multilateral outcomes that would be of enduring value to the entire international community. At a time of growing mistrust and rising international tensions, the role of the Commission as a platform for dialogue and cooperation assumes greater significance. The Commission can do more to improve its functioning by undertaking focused and results-oriented discussions on items on its agenda.

India attaches the highest priority to global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. As such, India has supported

the proposal put forward by NAM for the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention. Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the agreed mandate.

India participated in the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in the expectation that renewed attention to the most serious threat to the survival of humankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons would help generate momentum for restraints on the use of nuclear weapons and thus correct an imbalance in the international legal discourse that has focused exclusively on restraints on possession. We have called for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons in order to build trust and confidence, and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. India's resolutions in the First Committee on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons and on reducing nuclear danger have received the support of a large number of Member States.

The Disarmament Commission has contributed valuable guidelines in the area of practical confidence-building measures concerning conventional weapons, and came close to adopting consensus recommendations last year, though in the end they remained elusive. There is merit in building on those useful discussions with a view to bridging the remaining gaps. In our view, the key principles on the subject remain valid. The initiation and adoption of confidence-building measures must remain the prerogative of the States concerned and subject to their consent, and must be implemented in a manner that the relevant States are comfortable with.

The General Assembly has mandated the Commission to keep in mind a proposal to include a third item on its agenda for 2015, on which the Chair will be continuing consultations. While our priority remains the agenda item on nuclear disarmament, we will not stand in the way of consensus on a third agenda item, especially if it has the potential to expand the ground for consensus-building and to help the international community respond in a meaningful way to new and emerging challenges relevant to the disarmament agenda. The Commission can also benefit from the expertise of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in preparing background papers, insofar as there is adequate support for UNIDIR in doing so.

As we begin a fresh triennial cycle, this year's session assumes special significance in laying firm foundations for future progress. I would like to assure the Commission of the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation.

Ms. Kuznetsova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to your important post. Owing to the time constraints, I will give a shortened version of Russia's position, the full text of which will be circulated to delegations by the Secretariat.

The Russian Federation has always been a strong advocate of a comprehensive multilateral approach to addressing disarmament issues, provided that it conforms to the principles of strategic stability and equal and undiminished security for all. We reaffirm the central role of the United Nations in international efforts to ensure global stability and combat new challenges and threats. We are committed to working to strengthen, improve and perfect the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, of which the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is an integral part.

There can be no question that the UNDC should fulfil its mandate. The task it was assigned almost 40 years ago at the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament, of making recommendations on various problems in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, has lost none of its relevance. In our view, the Commission's solid expertise and years of experience are more necessary than ever for resolving issues of international security and global stability.

We should be under no illusions. The problems preventing the other elements of the United Nations disarmament triad from functioning effectively are present in the Commission as well. This is due above all to a lack of political will among States for mutual respect for differences in their priorities. We are willing to consider any ideas aimed at enhancing the UNDC's effectiveness, but the chief criterion should be the principle of "do no harm". The Commission has a reservoir of experience of productive work based on its existing rules of procedure and founded on the principle of consensus, which is fundamental

to the negotiation process in the area of multilateral arms control. Abandoning the principle of consensus would be fraught with damaging consequences for international security.

The next Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, possibly the most important event in our field, will open three weeks from now. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation and international security regime. One of the Conference's most important tasks will be to affirm the commitment to the Treaty's objectives and the obligations it imposes, as well as to strengthening the Treaty, based on the 2010 Review Conference's long-term action plan (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), which has retained its relevance. Its consensus-based provisions, founded on a balance between the three pillars of the NPT — non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — should be implemented. We hope that the Review Conference will also succeed in formulating new decisions as a follow-up to the action plan.

Liberating the world from the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, remains one of the international community's top priorities. Russia has been working actively to that end by taking concrete steps to limit and shrink its nuclear arsenal, which it has been significantly reducing for the past quarter of a century. That process will continue under the terms of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, in accordance with which by 2018 Russia's strategic arsenal will not exceed 1,550 nuclear warheads on 700 deployed launchers. We are working actively to implement that goal.

As Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin has affirmed, we are ready for a serious substantive dialogue on nuclear-disarmament issues — but a serious dialogue only, with no double standards. In particular, it is essential that we take into account the capabilities of high-precision non-nuclear weapons. We cannot permit a situation in which countries that are leaders in developing and producing such systems, augmented through ballistic-missile defences, gain a clear military advantage, which threatens to destroy strategic parity and destabilize the international situation in general.

We believe we cannot make progress towards a nuclear-free world without creating the appropriate international conditions that will enable us to reduce and limit nuclear armaments while strengthening strategic stability and providing equal and undiminished security for all. It is exactly that pathway that is envisaged in the decisions adopted within the NPT framework. One of the most destructive factors continues to be the unilateral and unconstrained deployment by the United States of its global missile defence system. The United States missile defence systems have been implemented under manufactured pretexts and to the detriment of other States' security, seriously complicating international relations not only in the Euro-Atlantic zone but in the Asia-Pacific region as well. The accelerated deployment by the United States of its missile defence system will be a serious obstacle to further nuclear disarmament and creates dangerous conditions that could lead to the resumption of the nuclear arms race.

Such a situation can be mitigated only if States developing anti-missile capabilities are governed — not just in words but in deeds — by the universal principle, agreed on within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, that says that it is unacceptable for one State to attempt to strengthen its national security at the expense of the security of other States. Strict compliance with this rule should become the starting point for seeking mutually acceptable outcomes on any issue of international security.

Another strategically negative factor is some States' unwillingness to forgo the possibility of putting weapons in outer space and to take steps to prevent an arms race in outer space, particularly those that would enable an appropriate legally binding international agreement to be reached. Russia and China's draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against objects in outer space could serve as a basis for such an agreement. Its updated version, which is under consideration at the Conference on Disarmament, has the support of all responsible States.

An important interim measure concerning the placement of weapons in outer space is the Russian initiative to not be the first to place weapons in outer space. Our initiative already enjoys the official support of all Collective Security Treaty Organization countries, as well as Brazil, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Argentina and Cuba. A greater number of States are now ready to follow that excellent example. During the

current session of the General Assembly, a resolution on the issue was adopted for the first time, with 34 sponsors. Voting on that resolution demonstrated that our initiative enjoys the overwhelming support of the international community. And those States that have been forced to abstain from supporting the resolution not only demonstrated their dependency on States that do plan to place weapons in outer space, but their inability to express their own national viewpoints.

With respect to the issue of nuclear disarmament, further steps are required, in particular by any State that has nuclear-weapon capacity. All such States must be involved in the process. Within the framework of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, Russia and the United States of America came to the conclusion that third-party States must also be included. Clearly, relevant multilateral, political and norminative frameworks must be established in order to address the issue. We do, of course, welcome unilateral steps taken by individual States to reduce their nuclear potential; however, we must also take into account the fact that such measures are not enshrined in any international legal document, are not subject to verification and may be revised at any point in time.

Among the most positive recent events, we should look to the unique chemical demilitarization operation that took place in Syria. Last summer's removal of all chemical weapons components from Syria and their subsequent destruction were made possible by the unprecedented political will of the Syrian Government, the decisive political and material support provided by the Russian Federation, and, undoubtedly, the work of the United Nations, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and other interested States. We believe that any further work concerning Syrian chemical weapons should be done under the auspices of the OPCW. Since joining the Chemical Weapons Convention, Damascus has demonstrated complete transparency, and has cooperated fully, which has often been reflected in United Nations and OPCW documents.

We would also draw attention to the highly lethal conventional weapons found in individual States and regions, which significantly increase the risk of the outbreak of armed conflict. In that regard, we believe it is crucial to establish multilateral transparency mechanisms, identify destabilizing factors and the proliferation of arms in a timely manner, and also promote dialogue between States in order to eliminate such concerns. We believe there is a need to take specific measures and effective steps aimed at preventing the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, including by introducing a universal ban on the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors, enhancing control on the re-export of such weapons, combating illegal brokerage, continuously controlling their exportation, conditions of storage and use by importers. Such measures would reduce the risk of those weapons falling into the hands of armed groups and terrorist organizations. We must remember that our main task is to prevent weapons from becoming tools used to violate the fundamental human rights or destabilize civil society.

This rapid overview of the current challenges faced by the Commission reveals the importance of basing our discussions on consensus and ensuring that the results are acceptable and advantageous to all. Therefore we would counsel against trying to reinvent the wheel. We should not think up new formats, but instead concentrate our efforts on intensive work to find adequate solutions to current problems. The effectiveness of the Commission depends not on some sort of short-term reform measures but on specific measures by individual States.

So let us be self-critical. The situation in the Commission reflects the way we work. I would like to assure the Commission that the Russian delegation is ready to work constructively with all delegations during the 2015 session on disarmament in order to work towards an approach that is acceptable to all.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): Malaysia extends our warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Allow me also to congratulate other Bureau members on their elections, as well as the chairpersons of the respective working groups. My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia for his contribution and efforts as Chair of last year's session of the UNDC.

Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Malaysia welcomes the constructive spirit among delegations through which we were able to reach consensus on our substantive agenda for the 2015-2017 cycle. The priority on consensus is important to us and

reaffirms the continued relevancy of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized body with universal membership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The UNDC takes an inclusive and deliberative approach, which is necessary to achieve an outcome that enjoys the broadest possible support. We recognize the difficulties inherent in realizing the disarmament agenda, whether for substantive UNDC debates or the broader goal of general and complete disarmament. My delegation views those challenges as an opportunity for all of us to take stock of the impasse in which we find ourselves and reaffirm our resolve to collectively reinvigorate the process. We call on all Member States and groups to renew their opposition to proliferation and demonstrate flexibility and political will in order to breach the gaps on issues of contention.

Within a few weeks many of us will be participating in the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons here in New York. Notwithstanding the fact that some of the Member States present here are not parties to the Treaty, it is our hope that a successful outcome to this year's UNDC session will help pave the road for consensus at the Review Conference. Malaysia believes that this year's Review Conference should continue the momentum towards greater cooperation in achieving the treaty's objective of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, my delegation gives particular importance to the obligations set forth under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, namely, that

> "[e]ach of the [p]arties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Since 1996, Malaysia has introduced the annual First Committee resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons", which calls upon all States to immediately fulfil the aforementioned obligations by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons, and providing for their elimination. In addition, in 2007, Costa Rica and Malaysia submitted to the General Assembly a model nuclear-weapons convention which proposed legal, technical and political elements for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Clearly, the international community is far from reaching these goals. As such, Malaysia believes that the UNDC, as the deliberative body of the United Nations on disarmament, should focus its discussions on concrete proposals for the elimination of nuclear weapons, such as elements for a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons as proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement. Malaysia stands ready to work with Member States on this initiative as well as on any other proposal with the ultimate aim of totally eliminating nuclear weapons.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, which was held in New York in 2014. We look forward to the upcoming Meeting of Governmental Experts in June to further strengthen and promote international cooperation on the Programme of Action which will enhance its effectiveness and complement existing bilateral, regional and international agreements to prevent, combat and eradicate the threat posed by small arms and light weapons.

In that regard, Malaysia will continue to support confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons at all levels, as that would contribute to strengthening international peace and security. Despite the nuanced and divergent views among Member States on this issue, my delegation hopes that in this year's deliberations in the UNDC we will be able to find common ground and move forward.

In conclusion, Malaysia looks forward to a more results-oriented session in 2015, and we pledge our full support and cooperation to you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau, as well as to other Member States, in order to achieve this end.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Mr. Chair, let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for this year. On behalf of my delegation, I assure you, Sir, of our full support and cooperation.

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The global security landscape is becoming increasingly complex. Even as old disputes remain unresolved in some regions, new conflicts and tensions have emerged from Europe and the Middle East all the way to Asia. The promise of a new century of peace and stability is now giving way to the gloomy advent of new cold wars.

The disarmament regime and architecture is not immune to this larger trend. There are clear differences of perspective, approach and modalities among Member States in dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Progress on nuclear disarmament remains stalled. Some nuclear-weapon States are willing to give up neither their large inventories of nuclear weapons nor their modernization programmes, even as they pursue non-proliferation with great zeal. And some 30 non-nuclear-weapon States — members of nuclear-armed alliances — continue to rely robustly on nuclear weapons while advocating abstinence by other States that are facing real security deficits, some of which are exacerbated by extravagant arms exports and nuclear cooperation.

Many States continue to pursue policies of granting waivers and exemptions from long-held non-proliferation principles, thus contributing to insecurity and imbalances in certain regions, especially South Asia. Military expenditures are rising and conventional weapons inventories expanding, including in South Asia. Meanwhile, new threats have arisen in areas such as the hostile use of outer space, offensive cybercapabilities, including cyberattacks on safeguarded nuclear facilities, the development and use of lethal autonomous weapon systems and armed drones, as well as the development of advanced conventional hypersonic systems with global reach.

The existing and emerging challenges to global and regional security — and consequently to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament — need to be addressed holistically on the basis of constructive and cooperative multilateralism. For over a decade, Pakistan has been advocating renewal and rebuilding of an international consensus on disarmament issues, based, inter alia, on the principle of equal security for all. This Commission, as a deliberative body with universal membership, can play an important role in evolving such a consensus. We recognize that consensus-building will be a difficult task, but we take this opportunity to put forward some ideas that we feel are essential to promoting greater cooperation in strengthening global security.

First, in developing a new approach, we must start from the same basic premise, that is, recognition of the right to equal security for all States. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament adopted the principle of equal security for all States, both in the non-conventional and conventional fields, and at the regional and international levels. This is an essential prerequisite for progress in the areas of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

Second, we must address the underlying security considerations that drive smaller States to seek weapons to defend themselves. These motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States, and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

Third, the nuclear-weapon States must demonstrate a renewed commitment to achieving nuclear disarmament that reduces and eliminates nuclear warheads and delivery systems within a reasonable time frame. Without this commitment, we will see further erosion of the bargain of the global non-proliferation regime, resulting in greater insecurity for all States. The eventual objective must be total elimination of nuclear weapons within the context of a re-energized collective multilateral security system.

Fourth, we must adopt an agreed, criteria-based and non-discriminatory approach in order to develop a framework to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate international safeguards. Advances in technology and improved inspections regime under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency have made it possible to promote proliferation-resistant nuclear technology.

Fifth, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States should be given assurances that they will not be threatened with the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The security assurances offered by nuclear-weapon States need to be translated into a universal, unconditional and legally binding treaty. As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan has consistently advocated such a treaty.

Sixth, we must develop a universal and non-discriminatory agreement to address concerns arising from the development, deployment and proliferation of anti-ballistic missile systems, which are inherently destabilizing and, of course, provoke missile build-ups.

Seventh, we must strengthen the international legal regime to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space.

Eighth, as a pragmatic step towards disarmament, the nuclear-weapon States need to halt future production and address the issue of existing stocks of weapon-usable fissile materials through a fissile material treaty negotiated multilaterally at the Conference on Disarmament.

Ninth, the development and use of drones and lethal autonomous robots need to be curbed, internationally regulated and made subject to international humanitarian law.

Tenth, regional issues that entail nuclear and missile aspects require approaches that go beyond the traditional framework of disarmament and non-proliferation. Hopefully the current challenges relating to the nuclear issues of countries in the Middle East and northeast Asia will be addressed in a cooperative framework. Pakistan supports the fulfilment in good faith by States of their international obligations in the area of international security. We also support the objective of creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. Resolution of those two issues can only be promoted through dialogue and negotiations.

Eleventh, there is also an urgent need for mutual and balanced reductions in armed forces and conventional armaments. As laid down in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), those negotiations should be conducted with particular emphasis on militarily significant States. The disturbing trend of escalation in the number and sophistication of conventional weapons has to be arrested, as this has a direct relationship to the continued reliance on nuclear weapons. Pakistan welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. We consider this milestone a first step towards regulating the trade and transfer of conventional weapons. Trade and transfer issues are organically linked to equally important aspects of excessive production and export, as well as arms control. A comprehensive approach is therefore needed to deal with both causes and manifestations of violence, wars and killings arising from the use of conventional weapons, small or large.

We support the development of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional arms. This has remained one of the traditional items on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and we have contributed constructively to deliberations on this in the last decade. We look forward to the Commission's proceedings on this important issue this year.

The challenges facing the international disarmament agenda and machinery are exclusive neither to the UNDC nor to the Conference on Disarmament. Other parts of the disarmament machinery are confronted with similar difficulties. Let us consider the state of affairs in the First Committee. In the past 10 years, several measures have been taken to rationalize and improve the Committee's methods of work. The primary goals of those efforts were to achieve efficiency and effectiveness, as well as results. Yet despite those measures, the effectiveness, authority and outcomes of the First Committee are apparent. More importantly, changes in working methods have not led to results on substance, such as, for example, movement on the priority accorded to nuclear disarmament.

Similarly, the Commission has not been able to agree on any document for more than a decade and a half. The differences in perceptions and priorities among Member States have been so profound that the Commission has not been able at times to even agree on the wording of its nuclear agenda item. The Disarmament Commission has also attempted in its own way to aid the improvement of its working methods. There is, of course, always room for improvement, but the real issue is how to deal with the political dynamics, the security challenges and developments outside the conference rooms of the United Nations. We stand ready to engage other delegations in efforts to reinvigorate the Commission, as well as other elements of the global disarmament machinery.

Finally, Pakistan calls for the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament, as this can provide the best chance for breaking the current impasse in disarmament, re-energize the role of the United Nations in promoting cooperative multilateralism in global security, and also respond to the demands of

civil society worldwide for a world that is safe and secure without nuclear and other non-conventional and advanced conventional weapons. The high-level segments of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament, while valuable, are no substitute for a fourth special session on disarmament. If some 50-plus Heads of State and Government can meet every two years since 2010 at nuclear security summits that deal with the security of about 15 per cent of the world's nuclear material, surely world leaders should meet in the General Assembly's special session devoted to disarmament to discuss security in a world of some 17,000 nuclear warheads.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Mr. Chair, I would like to express my delegation's warmest appreciation to you for your leadership of the 2015 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and to Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia for his leadership during the previous cycle.

My delegation wishes to record its most grateful appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, who opened our session, for her outstanding stewardship of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and her many accomplishments, and to her Office and its very able team for its support our deliberations.

There is no doubt that we must break the stalemate that has prevailed in the UNDC since 1999 and revitalize the effectiveness of the disarmament machinery to address the many new threats arising today. Kazakhstan will engage itself fully in pressing for momentum and for improvement in the working methods of the UNDC, based on the resolutions of the General Assembly and other disarmament platforms. Our thrust should be to consolidate the achievements of the past while responding to changing political situations and challenges.

It is clear that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must enjoy equal attention in the context of recent regional and global developments. We welcome the great strides made in winning support for the Arms Trade Treaty. Now that the Treaty has come into force, our focus must be on its effective implementation. We call for stronger regulation of the legal traffic in arms and strict adherence to the Treaty's provisions. Overall, trust- and confidence-building measures are critical to all aspects of disarmament and the vast range of complex related issues. The range of issues addressed in each of our segments is critically important. A deeper focus on their complexities would therefore yield better results.

In the light of rising tensions escalating in various regions of the world, Kazakhstan calls for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Additional Protocols. Every effort must be made to exercise genuine political will and compromise to ensure a successful outcome of the 2015 Review Conference and for us to move ahead. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is most critical. The CTBT can strengthen the NPT to move the process forward. For the period 2015-2017, Japan and Kazakhstan are co-Presidents of the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT, and we pledge to do our utmost to get the annex 2 countries to sign in order to safeguard our fragile and threatened world.

With regard to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, my delegation is pleased to report that the five nuclear-weapon States signed the Protocol to the Treaty in May 2014, thereby marking a significant landmark. We are also working to guarantee the physical security of nuclear materials and equipment in order to prevent nuclear proliferation and terrorism in the region. With the approval and supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, my country will host an international low-enriched-uranium bank in the eastern part of Kazakhstan.

We most warmly welcome the framework for an agreement between Iran and the 5+1 countries, and call on all parties to bring this process to fruition by the end of June. We are pleased that Kazakhstan also contributed to those negotiations by hosting two rounds in Almaty.

Our efforts to pursue the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must continue. Despite the political turbulence prevailing in the region, we strongly urge concerned Member States to hold a conference on the Middle East at the earliest possible time.

In order to further the overall goal of disarmament at the global level, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has proposed the adoption of a universal declaration for a nuclear-weapon-free world as the first step towards the drafting of a convention aimed at abolishing nuclear weapons.

A well-functioning Conference on Disarmament is sine qua non. If our efforts to adopt a strong programme of work continue to fail, we propose that the General Assembly consider reorganizing the disarmament machinery.

It is time that we begin to draft a fissile material cut-off treaty and a convention against nuclear weapons, and put into operation the five-point plan of the Secretary-General. In addition, the growing scenarios of the possible use of other weapons of mass destruction — including biological and chemical weapons — should be averted at all costs.

We wish to highlight the singular efforts of the High Representative in negotiating the removal of chemical weapons from Syria. At the same time, we urge ongoing vigilance against the possible recurrence, and thus greater support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, whose efficient operations in Syria we commend most highly.

Peace is necessary for development, and vice versa, in a globalized, interconnected world in the post-2015 period. Disarmament and non-proliferation efforts must therefore move in parallel with other global processes, such as poverty reduction, inclusive development, the rule of law, climate change, gender equality and others.

The regional efforts of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs deserve our full recognition and must be strengthened, as they contribute to realizing the vision of one United Nations, not only in the field of development but also in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation at the country, subregional and regional levels. The regional branches should be enhanced in playing their valuable role in the coordination of polices and activities in security-sector reform and the prevention and reduction of armed violence. Kazakhstan stands ready to provide, with other member States, a new momentum to the disarmament machinery so that, together, we can promote security, human advancement, peace, justice and human rights.

In conclusion, allow me to mention that I am truly honoured to be Chair of Working Group I on nuclear disarmament. This is a new cycle and so success is imperative if we are to make a contribution to the disarmament machinery, especially the work of the First Committee since it is held here in New York. What we discuss in these days will also have a bearing on the NPT Review Conference, to be held in the next two months. I look forward to the guidance, cooperation and support of the Commission, which are absolutely essential for us to move forward.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment and express Mexico's support to you in your work.

The year 2015 is a symbolic year in disarmament as it marks 70 years since the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 100 years since weapons of mass destruction were used for the first time, in Ypres, Belgium. 40 years since the Convention on Biological Weapons entered into force and 20 since the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, it is the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and the agreement of a new development agenda, a confluence of events that presents an excellent opportunity to reflect on the goals and work of the Organization.

Mexico expresses its regret that the United Nations disarmament machinery continues without fulfilling its mandate. Such deadlock and paralysis run counter to the spirit of multilateralism. Multilateral forums should serve as a space for countries to settle their conflicts and for processes leading to stables choices. Unfortunately, decision-making in the disarmament forums seems to be discouraged by the lack of political will and by prevailing circumstances. However, we note that the vast majority of States have shown themselves ready to negotiate and, in particular, that the number of voices speaking out against the illogical foundation of global security on weapons is growing.

These Headquarters will soon host the ninth five-year Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, in which Mexico will work constructively to attain a substantive outcome that advances the implementation of all provisions, commitments and obligations of the Treaty. Since the dimensions of non-proliferation and those related to protecting the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy have been met, the utmost priority must be given to compliance with article VI of the NPT, since no progress has been made on the disarmament pillar. In this sense, Mexico welcomes all initiatives that would lead to progress towards the prohibition and definitive elimination of nuclear weapons through multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations under the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency.

The three conferences held to date on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons have made a significant contribution to the debate and discussion on the scientific evidence and factual data available to better understand the impact of and risk posed by nuclear weapons. Mexico therefore urges that the findings of these conferences be considered in all forums where nuclear disarmament is discussed, including here in the Disarmament Commission. Mexico invites all States to give serious consideration to that proposal as a demonstration of their commitment to the very survival of humankind, and we urge all Member States to endorse the Austrian pledge, which has already been endorsed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Given the fact that those conferences were held outside of the framework of the United Nations, we believe that both the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission can and should incorporate consideration of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons into their discussions, since it is on those discussions that all of our actions and discussions should be based and that we should thereby progress together in disarming, not as an end in itself, but as a tool for attaining peace and security and preserving human security.

As recalled earlier this year, Mexico, in its capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, submitted a comprehensive programme of work aimed at conserving the nature and mandate of that forum as entrusted to it by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. However, the deadlock in that forum continues, and it has not been possible to begin negotiations towards agreements on legally binding universal treaties on disarmament in almost 20 years.

In the Disarmament Commission and in an effort to make progress towards nuclear disarmament, the delegation of Mexico expressed its support for the proposal made by Austria yesterday that the Commission should include under its first agenda item the aim of making recommendations on achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the identification of effective measures to bridge the legal gap for the elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons, and to prevent the catastrophic consequences of their use.

We regret that the Disarmament Commission — a deliberative body of the General Assembly — has not been able to put on its agenda the discussion of such effective measures or of the harm caused by nuclear weapons. In this regard, my delegation would like to state that we are letting our institutional settings for such discussion go to a waste and we are failing to fulfil the mandate enshrined to the disarmament machinery by the United Nations. This is cause for concern, as Mexico believes that genuine and lasting peace must be supported by international law, not by the accumulation of weapons. The machinery should therefore assist and not block normative progress in disarmament.

With regard to conventional weapons, Mexico welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 24 December 2014 and reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of that instrument. The international community now faces the challenge of implementing the regime established by the Treaty. Mexico City will therefore host, from 24 to 27 August 2015, the first conference of the States parties to the ATT, which will contribute to the configuration of a global regime to fight the effects of the illicit trade in conventional weapons in our societies.

With regard to disarmament confidence-building measures, Mexico reiterates that the principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility must apply to all disarmament efforts. One of the most effective ways, in Mexico's view, to build trust and transparency among countries is to cooperate with regional and international organizations by submitting timely, transparent, complete and clear information.

Mexico holds the position that multilateral forums should encourage and not inhibit deliberations and decision-making processes. We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission will free the potential of this forum to deliver conclusions and recommendations that bring us closer to a safer and more peaceful world.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the 2015 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).

Mr. Chair, I wish to thank you so very much for all you have done thus far to advance our work. In the coming days, Sir, you may count on the full support of the United States as you fulfil your important responsibilities. We also congratulate the other members

of the Commission's Bureau on their elections. In addition, we thank the 2014 UNDC Chair, Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia, for his intrepid efforts, both last year and this year, to help set this Commission on a productive course.

I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Ambassador Kim Won-soo as the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and express our gratitude for the able contributions of High Representative Angela Kane.

The Disarmament Commission is meeting on the eve of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains critical to our common security. Protecting its authority, while strengthening its implementation in all its aspects, are goals that all States parties to the Treaty share and that should guide our respective approaches to the upcoming Review Conference.

The NPT is an essential foundation for efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, and to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. These three mutually reinforcing pillars benefit all NPT parties. All parties should support and strengthen them. At the Review Conference, we look forward to working with all States parties to advance realistic, achievable objectives. We believe there are many areas where we could reach consensus on concrete measures to strengthen the NPT. We hope that parties will not allow divisive agendas to stand in the way of reaching the broadest possible consensus.

The Action Plan approved by consensus in 2010 was an unprecedented, breakthrough achievement. The Review Conference provides an opportunity to reaffirm the action plan, take stock of its implementation and update it where possible. At the Review Conference, the United States will pursue a balanced agenda across all three pillars. We will seek to ensure that International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards remain effective and robust and to uphold the Treaty's integrity by addressing non-compliance. We will detail our strong record on nuclear disarmament, our commitment to pursue further steps towards that goal, and our leading role in promoting peaceful nuclear energy.

In the realm of disarmament, a central focus of this Commission, I would like to take a few moments to highlight some very positive recent developments that we believe will further the common global effort to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

The sixth meeting of the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) on implementing the NPT was held in London from 4 to 5 February. The United States thanks the United Kingdom for hosting this very successful event. As the final statement of the conference noted, in reaffirming their commitment towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the NPT, the P-5 reflected on the contribution that the P-5 process has made in developing the mutual confidence and transparency among the P-5 that is essential to making progress towards multilateral nuclear disarmament.

The dialogue among the P-5 at high political and expert levels continues to increase transparency and confidence-building. The P-5 process illustrates our collective commitment to addressing challenges to the NPT and advancing shared NPT objectives. This is an important collaborative process, creating opportunities for increased technical and cooperative engagement. Future P-5 multilateral negotiations will build on the interaction, cooperation and trust-building that is happening now.

In Prague in December 2014, Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller announced a new initiative by the United States to form an international partnership for nuclear-disarmament verification. The partnership will provide a means to pursue technical work relating to nuclear disarmament goals. The United States was pleased to host the kick-off plenary meeting of the partnership from 19 to 20 March, in Washington, D.C. Officials from 26 States participated, including both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. The United States launched the initiative in concert with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). We believe that NTI's rich experience, including its recent project on innovating verification, will be a valuable contribution to this effort.

The principal goals of the partnership are, first, to build international capacity among States with and without nuclear weapons; secondly, to improve and broaden the understanding of the challenges inherent in nuclear-disarmament verification and monitoring; and, thirdly, to provide international leadership by facilitating technical progress towards meeting

these challenges. The work of the partnership will be technical in nature and led by technical experts.

This exciting and ambitious new endeavour will address these goals through dialogue among officials and experts from the participating countries as well as independent technical experts. It will be a long-term process. We made good progress in our first meeting; we had a good, open discussion on potential areas of interest and collaboration. We believe such cooperation will promote increased international understanding of, and confidence in, the monitoring and verification of future nuclear arms-control and disarmament agreements. All have an interest in the success of these efforts. We look forward to continuing partnership efforts and thank Norway for agreeing to host the next plenary meeting in Oslo this fall.

The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is the next logical step on the multilateral nuclear-disarmament agenda. It would establish a cap on fissile material available for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The United States has not produced highly enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons since 1964 and has not produced plutonium for use in nuclear weapons since 1989. We are committed to maintaining this moratorium on fissile-material production and encourage other States to maintain or adopt such moratoriums. The United States continues to seek the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT, and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains our preferred venue.

The recent discussions of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT were the most substantive in years. It is our hope that the Group's final report will motivate and revitalize the dialogue on the FMCT within the CD, helping to remove the blockage in negotiations there. Our expert worked to ensure that the Group's final report not only reflects the full range of issues discussed, but also the full range of expert views on those issues, as envisioned in the Shannon report (CD/1299). The Shannon report captures the one element on which all agree — the need to ban the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. All else should be the subject of consensus negotiations in the CD, and it is high time for the CD to get on with it.

With regard to the UNDC's agenda, we have noted in this Commission since April 2014 that outer space transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are an ideal topic for in-depth consideration as part of the Commission's agenda for the 2015-2017 issue cycle. Many other Member States assembled here today have expressed similar support for including such an item on the UNDC's agenda.

The United States is committed to the stable, sustainable and peaceful use and protection of outer space to support the vital interests of all nations. In this regard, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor with Russia and China resolutions 68/50 and 69/38. Both resolutions refer the recommendations contained in the 2013 consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) to the UNDC for consideration. Both resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly without a vote. Resolution 69/38 also calls for a joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability.

In addition to the current agenda items "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", the United States believes the Commission should establish a third agenda item, "Recommendations for the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", in furtherance of previous General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 69/77.

A UNDC working group on outer space TCBMs should take into account discussions on this topic in the Conference on Disarmament, and the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which also received the Group of Governmental Experts' report for consideration. These discussions include consideration by the Committee of relevant aspects of A/68/189 during its fifty-eighth session this June in Vienna. When Member States agree to add the topic of outer space TCBMs to the Commission's agenda, this development could be noted at the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees scheduled for this October here in New York.

Mr. Chair, as we work to finalize full agreement on the Commission's agenda for the 2015-2017 issue cycle, I would like to express my confidence in your ability to foster continuing consultations on developing

a consensus agenda emblematic of Member States' priorities, in particular with regard to outer space TCBMs. The United States looks forward to addressing the issues before the Commission in the coming years, offers the Chairs of the respective Working Groups its best wishes, and will do its part to facilitate a positive outcome.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): Mr. Chair, at the outset, I wish to join the other speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for this year's substantive session. I am sure, Sir, that your able stewardship will guide us through our deliberations for the next three weeks to achieve fruitful outcomes, and I assure you of my delegation's full support.

I would like to take this opportunity to also express my deep appreciation to Ms. Angela Kane, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her tireless efforts and crucial contributions in advancing the United Nations disarmament and non-proliferation agenda over the past three years.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War as well as the establishment of the United Nations. Over the decades, the disarmament machinery of the United Nations has played a central role in achieving important milestones in disarmament. While the need for further progress in multilateral disarmament is greater than ever today, it is regrettable that the United Nations disarmament bodies, including this Commission, have long ceased to function as an effective platform to advance our agenda. If this impasse continues, the Commission will lose its relevance, and soon its very foundation will be called into question. As the new triennial cycle begins, we must act with an ever greater sense of urgency to bring the work of the Commission back on track.

This year's substantive session of the UNDC is occurring in a dynamic environment. The 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will commence in just three weeks' time. Last week, the five plus one group (P-5+1) and the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed on a framework which would establish an important foundation for the resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. The Group of Governmental Experts has reached an agreement on its recommendations for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has entered into force, and its first Conference of States Parties will take place in a few months' time.

The Republic of Korea reaffirms its conviction that the NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We hope that based on a balanced approach to the three pillars of the NPT, this year's Review Conference will contribute to a further strengthening of the NPT regime and the implementation of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. The Commission should seize this opportunity to engage in constructive discussions that focus on common denominators rather than differences, and exert every effort to produce a meaningful outcome.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the political framework agreed by the P5+1 and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 2 April. The Republic of Korea sincerely hopes that, based on this crucial step, the negotiating parties will soon reach a complete, comprehensive resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. We once again express our full support for the negotiation process and hope that a peaceful, negotiated resolution of Iran's nuclear issue will set a positive precedent for addressing other critical security challenges in the world.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty last year was indeed an encouraging development. This substantive session should seize on this unique momentum to work towards specific recommendations on bolstering confidence-building mechanisms for conventional arms. Continued efforts to achieve universality of the ATT should be an essential step in this regard.

Even as the international community is taking joint steps toward the shared goal of disarmament, the North Korean nuclear issue continues to pose a grave challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country in the world that has conducted nuclear tests in the twenty-first century, and is continuing, even as we speak, to advance its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities in clear violation of its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

The international community has been clear and consistent in its position that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-

weapon State in accordance with the NPT under any circumstances. We once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in compliance with its international obligations, including those under the relevant Security Council resolutions. We hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will promptly return to a meaningful dialogue on its nuclear issue with a sincere attitude and commitment towards denuclearization.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my sincere hope that the Commission will emerge from the prolonged deadlock to once again serve as a valuable platform for adopting concrete guidelines and recommendations in the field of disarmament. This is a task that requires all of us to work together in a spirit of compromise and shared responsibility. We look forward to constructive discussions over the next three weeks.

Mr. Ceylan (Turkey): Mr. Chair, I would like to begin by congratulating you, the Bureau members and Chairs of the Working Groups for your election and wish you all success in your efforts to steer the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in its new substantive session. I also want to thank Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia for his dedicated chairmanship in the previous substantive session and for his facilitating role in the organization of the current one. My delegation is fully aware of the challenging task that you have assumed, Mr. Chair, and therefore reiterates its readiness to work closely with you and the Bureau in order to achieve a successful outcome by the end of the present session.

As we are all well aware, the UNDC, which was established as the main specialized deliberative body on disarmament affairs by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, has been deadlocked for nearly 16 years. Our shared aim should therefore be to find ways and means to enable it to once again formulate consensus principles, guidelines and recommendations on disarmament, as it did long ago.

In every substantive session in which we have failed to make a consensus recommendation to the General Assembly, the UNDC's credibility and relevance within the United Nations disarmament machinery erodes. Over the years, that has become a critical impediment to taking disarmament affairs forward. However, in the face of the current security circumstances — with shaky geopolitics and overwhelming challenges on the one hand, but also with new opportunities on the other, such as the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty and the recent important breakthrough in nuclear negotiations with Iran — and bearing in mind civil society's increasing role and the emerging trends in nuclear disarmament, the UNDC must now regain its designated role and carry out its mandate without further ado.

That will undoubtedly depend on the extent to which we can show flexibility in a collective fashion, and we are therefore happy to see that after long consultations we have finally come up with an agenda for the new triennial cycle in line with General Assembly resolution 69/77. The two items on the agenda will enable us to focus in the new cycle on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as on confidence-building measures on conventional arms. We believe that a constructive approach is essential to success. When we look at the impasses that have put obstacles in the way of the Disarmament Commission, we can see that declaratory stances that are too static and a lack of flexibility are among the main reasons for the current deadlock.

Achieving tangible results in the UNDC requires that we address issues at the core of its agenda, so I would like to emphasize my delegation's strong desire to contribute to consensus outcomes in both Working Groups, on nuclear weapons and non-proliferation and on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We are ready to support any consensus that can emerge in this room. However, if the linkage problem between the Working Groups recurs again, as it did in the last substantive session, it will be useless to secure consensus within one working group. That may render the work of the UNDC a non-starter. My delegation therefore supports the idea that the efforts of each Working Group should be treated separately, since otherwise our search for ways and means to advance the Commission's work through practical measures, such as the inclusion of a third agenda item, will yield no results either.

Today we can talk about a new state of affairs in international peace and security. We cannot completely understand those new circumstances without paying due attention to the issue of complexity. While all security threats are now in some way interrelated, each has different underlying dynamics, and disarmament,

as a fundamental issue of security, cannot be detached from that complex environment. The concept of security today is not merely the realm of States, defending peace and security for their peoples who strive for them. We recognize the role of civil society in that regard. We want disarmament for our peoples and our future generations. We are aware of the growing interest in the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. Turkey has participated in the three conferences held so far on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

However, it is not just nuclear weapons but also chemical, biological and every other type of weapon that have humanitarian consequences. Unfortunately, and regrettably, we have witnessed that stark reality with every chlorine attack by the regime's forces that has occurred in Syria. Such realities should not be disregarded when we are dealing with issues of major significance for world peace. Turkey therefore expects that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will investigate the recent incidents, while the Security Council ensures that its own related resolutions, 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015), will help to hold those responsible for these attacks to account. However, as a forum for discussion, the UNDC also plays a role in this and should take the issue into consideration in its future deliberations.

In the wake of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a breakthrough in the Disarmament Commission would be an encouraging signal for our ultimate goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. We should therefore seize the opportunity of last week's agreement between Iran and the P5+1 countries on Iran's nuclear programme, and draw the necessary lessons for our Commission's work. Turkey, a staunch advocate of the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in conformity with the rules and norms set out by the International Atomic Energy Agency, has supported those negotiations from the outset, and is now happy to see that a general, practical political framework for a comprehensive deal on the nuclear issue may be achieved.

Turkey has actively supported and contributed substantially to the diplomatic efforts since our non-permanent membership of the Security Council in 2009 and 2010, and we played a crucial role in the Tehran Joint Declaration back in 2010. We view diplomacy as the only option for solving the problem of Iran's nuclear programme and have actively supported the work being done to arrive at a peaceful solution. We hope that the new comprehensive political framework agreement will be completed with the necessary technical details by the end of June and thoroughly implemented in the years ahead. We expect to see positive results from the agreement in our region, in line with the general principle of undiminished security for all.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express our full support to you, Mr. Chair, and to the Bureau members.

Mr. Fukahori (Japan): At the outset, I would like to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as to the newly elected members of the Bureau, and to assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The Commission was once renowned as the leading deliberative United Nations body in the field of disarmament, while the Conference on Disarmament (CD) was established in Geneva as the only multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. However, both have failed to fulfil their mandates. Although in the past the UNDC adopted 16 consensus documents on guidelines and recommendations, including the well-known guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it has now remained in deadlock for about 15 years, and last year it again failed to come up with a consensus document that could lead us towards further disarmament. Although Japan will continue to participate actively in the Commission, all of us here should be aware that its inability to produce a substantive outcome has put its raison d'être into serious question, and we should cooperate in order to find a way to revitalize its work.

This year marks 70 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will begin on 27 April. As the only country ever to have suffered atomic bombings in war, Japan has long been committed to pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons, and thus believes it will be important to achieve a concrete outcome at the upcoming Review Conference.

There can be no doubt that a world free of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved without cooperation between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

All of us should cooperate to advance practical and effective measures aimed at realizing our long-term vision. Japan, together with other member States of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), has submitted 19 practical proposals to the Secretariat of the Review Conference, including a comprehensive proposal derived from the Hiroshima statement adopted at the NPDI's ministerial meeting in April 2014. We strongly believe that our proposal provides a good basis for a consensus at the upcoming Review Conference and hope to gain support from States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPDI's proposal calls on both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States to take concrete action, and it covers a wide range of issues. With regard to disarmament, our Government particularly stresses the importance of the following three points. First, nuclear-weapon States should ensure the transparency of their nuclear force as a premise for disarmament. Transparency also contributes to building confidence and thus improves the security environment. Secondly, nuclear-weapon States should reduce all their types of nuclear weapons and should eventually begin multilateral nuclear-weapon reduction negotiations. And thirdly, nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States should unite in order to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons, based on discussions of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

As the only country to have ever suffered nuclear bombings in war, Japan understands and is familiar with the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. We have therefore proactively contributed to discussions on the issue. I would like to reiterate that a clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins all nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Discussion of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons should therefore be inclusive and open to all States striving for a world free of nuclear weapons, so that the humanitarian aspect of disarmament can function as a driving force for our efforts. In that context, I encourage all my colleagues to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to better understand the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of atomic bombings, and I also urge them to visit the permanent exhibition on the atomic bombings here at the United Nations. It is my sincere hope that the upcoming NPT Review Conference will take a step forward towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Addressing the enormous damage caused by conventional arms continues to be extremely important to the international community and is an area in which United Nations leadership is needed. Japan has been supportive of a greater role for the United Nations in the field since we proposed the establishment of a United Nations register for conventional arms. In that regard, I would like to mention two significant challenges that States Members of the United Nations will have to confront in the coming months.

First, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force last year. It is very important to ensure that the Treaty is effectively implemented and universally recognized. We would like to encourage all Member States to become parties to the ATT. As one of the original authors of General Assembly resolution 61/89, which initiated the ATT process, Japan will continue to work hard with other Member States and civil society to achieve the Treaty's effective implementation.

Secondly, the 2015 Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will be an important opportunity to advance United Nations efforts to tackle the enduring problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Based on the recommendation of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action, we are expecting to discuss recent developments in technologies, the effectiveness of national marking, record-keeping and tracing systems, technology transfer and capacity-building for implementing the Programme of Action and the Customs Convention on the International Transit of Goods. Japan commends Ambassador Lupan, Chair-designate of the Open-Ended Meeting, for the transparent and efficient manner in which he has been conducting the preparatory work towards the Conference in June. Japan will continue to work actively to achieve a successful outcome at the Open-Ended Meeting.

Despite the lack of progress within the United Nations disarmament machinery, there is still hope. For example, last week in Geneva the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, established by a General Assembly resolution

in 2012 (67/53), completed their substantive work. I am confident that the work has enabled experts to engage in substantive discussions on various aspects of a future fissile material cut-off treaty, thus providing signposts that can help guide future negotiations for such a treaty.

In order to have a positive impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the aforementioned Group of Governmental Experts, now is the time for us to consider how we can revitalize the UNDC so that it can produce useful guidelines and recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation in accordance with its original mandate. To that end, Japan will continue to provide all the support it can to the Chair and to contribute to productive deliberations in this important body.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since today's meeting is part of the general debate, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your chairship of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, for his efforts as Chair during the Commission's previous session. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups, and I would like to reiterate our support for the Commission's efforts.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Groups of African and Arab States.

(*spoke in English*)

This year is a particularly important one for the UNDC, since it begins a new cycle. A successful outcome will require consensus on the issues discussed by the two Working Groups, that is, recommendations for achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. A consensus substantive outcome is extremely important if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC to the multilateral disarmament machinery, especially given the successive failure since 1999 of past cycles of the Commission to adopt an outcome. In that regard, we particularly urge the nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters in their respective areas covered by Working Groups I and II, to display the political will needed to reach a substantive result on the two important issues that are before us on the Commission's agenda, in order to realize the UNDC's potential in furthering the cause of disarmament.

The way the agenda was arrived at this morning gives us an opportunity to further refine the issues as we proceed through the three years of the cycle, in order to facilitate our task of reaching substantive recommendations on the two topics on our agenda. We thank you, Sir, for the way you framed things as a reference to the relevant General Assembly resolution 69/77, which should guide our work so that we can further refine and arrive at specific, concrete recommendations, particularly on nuclear disarmament, which remains the international community's priority, as per the Assembly's first special session on disarmament.

Focusing specifically on the agenda for Working Group I, we believe that our starting point in that regard should be the implementation of General Assembly resolution 69/58, on the follow-up to the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament held on 26 September 2013. The resolution continues to chart a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and the UNDC should be ready to contribute its part to the deliberations on the implementation of that road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of such weapons, and to provide for their full destruction.

In this regard, Egypt welcomes the continued momentum in reviving the international debate on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the incompatibility of their use with international humanitarian law. We support the calls that reverberated in the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons for the development of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, and nuclear-weapon States bear a special responsibility for avoiding any possibility of what would be a catastrophe.

Related to this, the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an indispensable step towards the achievement of general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adds impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community has recognized the urgency in particular of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear

weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite these repeated calls and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of the zone, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote and which enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, remains unfulfilled. Yet it remains valid until its objectives are achieved and, hence, should be implemented without any further delay.

The UNDC provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to bringing the process back on track. It provides us an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate and restore the credibility and relevance of the NPT review process, if not the Treaty itself. Particularly timely are the meetings of the UNDC this year a few weeks before the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The deliberations of the Working Group II of the UNDC on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons also assumed a growing importance. By contributing to a debate on confidence-building measures, the UNDC will be helping to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons, including the salient issue of small arms and light weapons. We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence-building measures.

First, the overproduction of and ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers must be subjected to international scrutiny. More than at any time in history, the stockpiling and production of these weapons make the world less secure, and that undermines confidence. It is up to the UNDC to address this issue in this session and in this cycle.

Secondly, mutual international accountability, as the only guarantee against the potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world, is necessary.

Thirdly, protracted threats to international peace and security must be addressed. In this regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than the crime of aggression and foreign occupation that employ conventional armed arsenals to threaten and dominate people and deny them their most basic human rights. By developing such confidence-building measures, the UNDC will be refining the traditional meaning of the term, thus contributing conceptually to enhancing international peace, security and stability.

Egypt stands ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations of the Commission to ensure a balanced outcome between the results of the two Working Groups — an outcome that reflects the interests of all States. We are confident in your ability, Mr. Chair, to steer the discussions towards a successful outcome of not only the session, but of the cycle as a whole.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker in the general exchange of views today.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to respond to the statement made by the representative of South Korea.

As the representative of South Korea has pointed out, we possess nuclear weapons as nuclear deterrents, and we have to continue to take the necessary measures to strengthen these deterrents. We developed nuclear weapons not because we wanted to have them, but because an external condition compelled my country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to possess them. That external condition was and is the hostile policy of the United States towards my country. The United States wants to destroy my country and its ideals and systems by nuclear threats. In order to deal with that, we were compelled to possess nuclear weapons.

As long as the hostile policy of the United States, which has recently been manifested by the open announcement by President Obama that North Korea should be toppled, continues, we cannot give up nuclear weapons. Our nuclear weapons are meant to safeguard the Korean nation and the Korean peninsula and to defend peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The representative of South Korea is now talking about the nuclear problem, but at the same time

large-scale war exercises, which are unprecedented in their nature and scale, are being carried out in South Korea with the United States. I want to clearly point out that we were compelled to possess nuclear weapons in the face of the hostile policy of the United States for the good of our nation. There is no reason for the South Korean Government to be uncomfortable with our nuclear deterrent unless it adheres to the United States' hostile policy in a humiliating manner.

I will elaborate our position further through our statement tomorrow in the general debate.

Mr. Lim Sang Beom (Republic of Korea): I am sorry to take the floor at this late time, but I have to respond to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to exercise my right of reply.

As the Disarmament Commission knows, under relevant Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, North Korea is obliged to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, including its uranium-enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. North Korea must fully understand that it cannot obtain anything by developing its nuclear programme and continuing its provocative acts.

The representative of North Korea mentioned our joint military exercises, but I would like to clarify that the Republic of Korea-United States joint exercises have been conducted annually for several decades to respond to the clear and existing military threat of North Korea and are purely defensive in nature. These exercises have been conducted in a transparent manner, with advance notification provided to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and under the observation of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.

North Korea has continued to violate Security Council resolutions by carrying out three nuclear tests, four long-range ballistic missile tests, as well as multiple short- and mid-range ballistic-missile launches. The sinking of the Republic of Korea's navel vessel, the Cheonan, and the launching of the artillery attack on Yeonpyeong island by North Korea in 2010 also demonstrate the existence of a persistent and clear military threat from the north.

The facts speak for themselves. It is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that has not only created, but also escalated, tensions in the region.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am sorry to ask you, Mr. Chair, for the floor again. I have many things to say in response to the representative of South Korea. It would take one or two days to say everything I have to say, but we are not here in the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for that purpose.

I think the representative of South Korea has some wrong ideas about the way forward. He appears to be trying to change the nature of our work at the UNDC. I do not want to go into details or engage in lengthy explanations to the representative of South Korea, but I want to say that his statements are not acceptable and cannot fly.

Mr. Lim Sang Beom (Republic of Korea): I am sorry to take the floor once again. I just want to point out one thing. If North Korea makes a strategic decision to abandon its nuclear programmes, we are prepared to cooperate with the international community to fully help North Korea to participate in the global economy and develop peacefully. We hope that North Korea moves in this direction.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.